

How Adults Learn Three Factors

Directions: It is important to set the physical and psychological climate to establish a learning atmosphere. Three factors define a learner's "training climate":

Type	The Learner's	Trainer's Response
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor hearing/eyesight • Health • Fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use larger visuals/ microphone • Adjust time of day • Classroom atmosphere
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-concept • Values and attitudes • Fear of change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study alone/with others • Motivation (see below)
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous learning • Expectations • Passive vs. active learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to "Characteristics of Adult Learners" and "Learning Styles"

Characteristics of Adult Learners

Adults:	Therefore:
Are motivated by goals	Do not assume. Clearly explain training goals.
Pursue training with a sense of purpose	Tell them why your information is important to them by creating the "big picture."
Have increasing self-reliance, autonomy, and inner-directedness	Plan periods where individuals can work independently or with oversight rather than on a continuous basis with a trainer.
Lack confidence in their ability to learn	Plan activities where individuals can demonstrate learning in a protected atmosphere until learning is mastered.

How Adults Learn Three Factors

Adults:	Therefore:
Are problem-oriented, and want training related to the real world	Use real rather than hypothetical information.
Pursue accuracy rather than speed and have declines in vision, hearing, energy, and reaction speed as they get older; they have a fear of failure since they do learn more slowly	Design training packages that take these factors into account.
Need to have theory immediately applied to practice	Plan exercises immediately after initial training.
Need to feel comfortable taking risks and experimenting with what they have learned	Participants may need to identify a method to accomplish the work in an equally effective way.
Learn in his or her way, and at his or her own pace.	Provide different ways for the individual to learn (i.e., reading, seeing, hearing, doing, and watching others) until you identify how that individual learns best. Make sure that each person understands his/her personal responsibility for success.
Come to training sessions with work experience	Plan to integrate his/her experience into the training.
Are typically verbal	Include opportunities for trainees to contribute to discussions and share personal experiences.
Learn faster and remember longer those things which are repeated several times	Identify methods in training to repeat the information (for example, a small group exercise or demonstration using the new information).

How Adults Learn
Three Factors

Adults:	Therefore:
Learn best when they can see evidence of progress	Examples include using prior learning to accomplish a new task, or moving from demonstrating learning under supervision to oversight to independence. Comments by the preceptor regarding their progress help trainees further realize accomplishment.